

The Days, Months and Seasons

(*Abhidhānappadīpaka*, v. 74-81)

Ghaṭikā saṭṭhyahoratto, pakkho te dasapañca ca,

There are sixty hours in the day and night, a fortnight has fifteen of these (days),¹

Te tu pubbāparā sukkakālā, māso tu te duve.

There are the former and later, brightening and darkening (fortnights), and there are two of these to a month.

Citto, Vesākha, Jeṭṭho c' Āsālho dvīsu ca Sāvaṇo,

Citta, Vesākha, Jeṭṭha and Āsālha, and the two Sāvaṇas (early and late),²

Poṭṭhapād' Assayujā ca māsā dvādasa Kattiko.³

Poṭṭhapāda, Assayuja, the twelve months (include) Kattika.

Māgasiro tathā Phusso, kamena Māgha-Phagguṇā.

Māgasira and then Phussa, and by and by Māgha (and) Phagguṇa.

Kattik' Assayujā māsā pacchimapubba-Kattikā.

The months Kattika and Assayujaś are (also) known as the late and early Kattika.

Sāvaṇo Nikkhamanīyo, Cittamāso tu Rammako.⁴

Sāvaṇa (is also known as) Nikkhamanīya, the month Citta (is also known as) Rammaka.

Caturo caturo māsā, Kattikakālapakkhato

Four by four months, (starting) from the darkening fortnight in Kattika

Kamā Hemanta-Gimhāna-Vassānā utuyo dvisu.

In order there is the Winter, Summer and Rainy seasons (divided) in two.

¹ Sometimes a fortnight has only 14.

² There are potentially two of these months as there is an occasionally need to adjust the moon calendar to the sun calendar. In Myanmar and Sri Lanka that adjustment is made at the beginning of the Rainy Season; in Thailand and Cambodia, however, the adjustment is made when required by the astronomical calculations. It is known as the *adhikamāsa* (extra month)

³ The month is normally written in the feminine gender, as *Kattikā*, but in *Abhidhānappadīpaka* it is given as a masculine.

⁴ These are alternative names.

Hemanto Sisiram-utū, cha vā Vasanto ca Gimha-Vassānā,
The six seasons are: Snowy (and) Cool, Spring (and) Hot, Rainy

Sarado ti kamā māsā, dve dve vuttānusārena.
(And) Autumn, that is the order of the months, two by two according to what is said.

Uṇho nidāgho gimho 'tha, vasso Vassānapāvusā,
Then there is the Hot, the Boiling (or) the Heat (season), the Rains, the Rainy (or) the Showery (season),⁵

Utūhi tīhi Vassānādikehi dakkhiṇāyanam,
In the three seasons, from the beginning of the Rainy (season, the Sun) goes by the southern path,

Uttarāyanam-aññehi, tīhi vassāyanadvayam.
(It goes) by the northerly path in the other (months), in the year there are (these) two paths.

⁵ These are alternative names.

Synopsis of the Months and Seasons

Māsa = Months	Cha Utu = Six Seasons	Ti Utu = Three Seasons
Citta = Mar-Apr <i>aka Rammaka</i>	Vasanta = Spring	Gimhāna = Summer
Vesākha = Apr-May		
Jeṭṭha = May-Jun	Gimha = Hot <i>aka Uṇha, Nidāgha</i>	
Āsāḷha = Jun-Jul		
Sāvaṇa = Jul-Aug <i>aka Nikkhamanīya</i>	Vassāna = Rainy <i>aka Vassa Pāvusa</i>	Vassāna = Rainy
Poṭṭhapāda = Aug-Sep <i>aka Bhaddapadā</i>		
Assayuja = Sep-Oct <i>aka Pubbakattika</i>	Sarada = Autumn	
Kattika = Oct-Nov <i>aka Pacchimakattika</i>		
Māgasira = Nov-Dec	Hemanta = Snowy	Hemanta = Snowy
Phussa = Dec-Jan		
Māgha = Jan-Feb	Sisira = Cool	
Phagguṇa = Feb-Mar		

In Sanskrit the names are: Caitra, Vaiśākha, Jyaiṣṭha, Āṣāḍha, Śrāvaṇa, Bhādrapada, Āśvina, Kārttika, Mārgaśīrṣa, Pauṣa, Māgha, Phālguna.

In the Buddhist system the month itself normally consists of either 30 days (normally 18 times a year) or 29 days (normally 6 times a year), and starts the day after full moon (*puṇṇimantamāna*), running up till the following full moon. The season also begins the day after the Full Moon.

The Buddhist calendar calculations are based on the Lunisolar year. Important dates (like the Awakening) being commemorated on the Moon cycle, and the Moon cycle itself being adjusted to fit in with the Solar cycle.

This results in an additional month being added in to the calendar roughly every 2 or 3 years (it normally needs 7 extra months every 19 years). Intercalary days (*adhikavāra*) are also added in as and when required, there being 11 extra days every 57 years.

The Buddhist era (BE, which begins at year 0 in Sri Lanka, and year 1 in Thailand) starts at the day the Buddha attained Parinibbāna, which, according to the traditional reckoning was on 11th March 544 BC (this date is disputed by many scholars, but this is the date that is current in Buddhist countries). According to this dating he was therefore born in 624 BC and attained Awakening in 589 BC.

Days

The days of the week do not seem to be mentioned in Pāli literature, but they are given in Ven. Buddhaddatta's English-Pali Dictionary as follows:

- Candavāra** = Monday
- Kujavāra** = Tuesday
- Budhavāra** = Wednesday
- Guruvāra** = Thursday
- Sukkavāra** = Friday
- Sanivāra** = Saturday
- Ravivāra** = Sunday